



News Release

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Biden-Harris Investing in America Agenda Lowers Energy Costs for Rural Business Owners and Agricultural Producers

MONTPELIER, July 13th, 2023 – As part of President Biden’s *Investing in America* agenda, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business-Cooperative Service Administrator Dr. Karama Neal today announced that USDA is making **\$21 million in technical assistance grants available through the [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#)** to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses access federal funds for renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements.

“Rural America deserves its share of the historic investments in the Inflation Reduction Act,” Neal said. “That’s why the Biden-Harris Administration is making sure rural people get a fair chance at grants to make energy more affordable, create new economic opportunity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The technical assistance grants I am announcing today will provide hands-on support to farmers, ranchers and rural small business owners seeking federal funds for renewable energy systems, like wind and solar, and energy-efficiency measures. These investments help producers and small businesses lower energy costs, access new markets and strengthen their operations.”

“For years, the Rural Energy for America Program established itself as one of USDA’s most popular and successful programs, particularly with our farmers” said **Sarah Waring, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Vermont and New Hampshire**. “Now, with another \$1 billion in extra REAP funding from the historic Inflation Reduction Act championed by the Biden-Harris Administration, the program is more flexible and has more funding to help farmers and small businesses cut costs and carbon emissions. Today’s announcement of new REAP Technical Assistance Grants means our partners can serve more prospective clients looking to install renewable energy systems or upgrade energy efficiency in their operations. This is what creative solution-making looks like in the age of Climate Change, and we’re excited to see the many differences REAP TAG will make on the ground.”

Eligible grant recipients include businesses, nonprofits, state and local governments, colleges and universities, and electric co-ops and utilities. Funds may be used to:

- Help rural agricultural producers and small business owners apply for REAP funding.
- Provide information on how business owners and agricultural producers can improve the energy efficiency of their operations and use renewable energy technologies and resources.
- Conduct required energy assessments and audits.
- Help agricultural producers and small business owners plan, build or develop renewable energy or energy-efficiency projects.

This announcement is part of President Biden’s *Investing in America* agenda and the Bidenomics strategy to grow the American economy from the middle out and bottom up by rebuilding our nation’s infrastructure, driving over \$500 billion in private-sector manufacturing investments, creating good-paying jobs, and building a clean-energy economy to tackle the climate crisis and make our communities more resilient. REAP is also part of the [Justice40 Initiative](#), which is advancing environmental justice by ensuring that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments reach disadvantaged communities that are marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment.

USDA will give funding priority to applicants proposing to assist disadvantaged communities, applicants pursuing projects using underutilized technologies, and applicants seeking grants under \$20,000.

Interested applicants in Vermont and New Hampshire can find more information in the REAP TAG [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#), and can apply through the [Vermont & New Hampshire REAP TAG Application Package](#). For questions, contact the [USDA Rural Development State office](#).

PLEASE NOTE: Due to recent flooding across much of Vermont, there have been multiple power outages and significant damage to roadways, buildings and homes. Montpelier’s State Office for Rural Development is unreachable. Many of our staff are online and able to address your inquiries, but responses may take longer than usual.

Inflation Reduction Act: Background

The Biden-Harris Administration championed the Inflation Reduction Act to help provide new funding and unprecedented incentives to expand clean energy, transform rural power production, create jobs and spur economic growth. It is the largest single investment in rural electrification since the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

Through the Inflation Reduction Act, the Administration is delivering on its promise to fight climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across America. The Inflation Reduction Act provides funding to USDA Rural Development to help eligible organizations invest in renewable energy infrastructure and zero-emission systems and make energy efficiency improvements that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

To learn more about investment resources for rural areas, visit www.rd.usda.gov or contact the nearest [USDA Rural Development state office](#).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

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